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Viewing cable 05VATICAN562, VATICAN WARY OF LEFTIST LATINOS

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05VATICAN562	2005-12-23 11:09	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Vatican

Appears in these articles:

<http://wikileaks.jornada.com.mx/notas/el-vaticano-recelaba-de-latinoamericanos-izquierdistas-desde-2005-revela-wikileaks>

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RR RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHFL RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHKW RUEHLA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VATICAN 000562

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR EUR/WE LARREA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/23/2015

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SUBJECT: VATICAN WARY OF LEFTIST LATINOS

REF: A. REFS: A) LARREA-MARTIN EMAIL; B) CARACAS 3757; C) VATICAN 551 ET AL.; D) VATICAN 552

¹B. A) LARREA - MARTIN 12/9 EMAIL; B) CARACAS 3757; C) VATICAN 551 ET AL.;
D) VATICAN 552

VATICAN 00000562 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Peter Martin, Pol/Econ Chief, Vatican, State.

Summary

¶1. (C) The Ambassador shared ref (a) points on Venezuela's nefarious influence in the region with Holy See internal affairs chief (Vatican number three) Archbishop Leonardo Sandri December 17. Some points were news to Sandri, but he was not surprised and said he shared U.S. concerns about Chavez and other leftist leaders in Latin America. An interlocutor from the Vatican MFA as well told the Ambassador that he and his superiors were wary of connections among these leaders. Neither prelate thought the Vatican would become more aggressive in speaking out against these figures, both because of recent history and the potential for a backlash against the Church. The Ambassador will see FM Lajolo after the holidays to continue this dialogue. End Summary.

Sandri Under No Illusions

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met with Archbishop Leonardo Sandri December 17 for a wide-ranging conversation on the Church in Latin America. Sandri, an Argentine and former nuncio to Venezuela, is the chief of Vatican internal operations and generally regarded as the Holy See's number three behind the pope and Secretary of State. Ambassador discussed ref (a) points, emphasizing the danger Chavez poses to the governments around him. Sandri was aware of some points, but others came as news to him. In any case, he was not surprised. Sandri said he was convinced that Chavez was dangerous from the time he took office and Sandri was stationed in Caracas. The archbishop said he had taken a harder line than the U.S. Embassy at the time, who told him to "wait and see" what Chavez did in office.

Holy See Concerned

¶3. (C) According to Sandri, who said he knew the pope's thinking on the subject, the Holy See is concerned about a general leftward shift in Latin America. He mentioned concerns about several figures who seemed to be looking to Castro and Chavez, including Mexico's Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. Holy See MFA Country Director for the U.S. and Mexico Monsignor Paolo Gualtieri told the Ambassador in a separate meeting December 15 that his superiors in the MFA were of a similar mindset. They see the connections between Chavez, Castro, and other leftist politicians in Latin America, and are concerned about the dangers they present on many levels.

What to Do?

¶4. (C) While the Vatican agrees that these figures are dangerous, it sees the question of how to deal with them as more complicated. The Ambassador's conversation with Sandri tracked closely with the description of the pope's concern on Venezuela noted in ref (b). However, Sandri stuck to the previous Vatican line on engagement there; he did not see the Holy See changing its non-confrontational approach to Chavez given the recent history between Venezuela and the Holy See (ref c). He responded favorably to the idea that direct aid from the U.S. Catholic Church to the Venezuelan Church to help the latter build up its social programs could help counteract Chavez's appeal and blunt his attacks on the Church. Gualtieri noted that in the case of someone like Lopez Obrador, the Church had to be careful not to overstep its bounds into politics, no matter how it felt. He said Masonic groups and some segments of Mexican society were ready to pounce on bishops or clergy who strayed into the political realm (ref d).

Comment

¶5. (C) The Holy See continues to feel that a non-confrontational approach to Chavez is the right strategy for the time being, but the Vatican hierarchy is under no illusions

about the danger of Chavez and kindred souls - and the connections between them. Sandri has great influence in the Vatican and as a former nuncio to Venezuela his views on that country carry particular weight. But his formal competency is the internal affairs of the Church. The Ambassador will see Gualtieri's boss, FM Lajolo, after the holidays to continue this dialogue, as Lajolo has the lead on all questions of foreign policy.

ROONEY